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Letter dated 14 December 2000 from the Secretary-General to the President of the Security Council

As you are aware, on 12 December 2000, I witnessed the signing of the agreement between the Government of the State of Eritrea and the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, which took place in Algiers at a formal ceremony hosted by President Abdelaziz Bouteflika. The Peace Agreement was signed by President Isaias Afwerki and by Prime Minister Meles Zenawi on behalf of their Governments.

The conclusion of the 12 December Agreement marks an important victory for peace between Eritrea and Ethiopia, and a major achievement for the African continent as a whole. I commend both parties for their cooperation and commitment. I also wish to pay tribute to the Organization of African Unity and to the Government of Algeria, in particular President Bouteflika, for their tireless efforts to bring the negotiations to a successful conclusion. I should also like to express my appreciation to the Representative of the President of the United States of America, Anthony Lake, and to the Personal Envoy of the Presidency of the European Union, Rino Serri, for their role in achieving the 12 December Agreement.

Article 1 of this Agreement provides that the two parties shall permanently terminate military hostilities between themselves, shall refrain from the threat or use of force against each other, and shall respect and fully implement the provisions of the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities of 18 June 2000 (S/2000/601, annex).

The 12 December Agreement also provides for the early release and repatriation of prisoners of war and all other persons detained as a result of the armed conflict. The text calls for an investigation to be conducted by an independent and impartial body to determine the origins of the conflict. It provides for the establishment of a neutral boundary commission, which is mandated to delimit and demarcate the colonial treaty border based on pertinent colonial treaties and applicable international law. Under the Agreement, both parties foresee that the United Nations cartographer should serve as secretary to that commission. The Agreement further provides for the establishment of a neutral commission to decide on all claims for loss, damage or injury from either side.

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In welcoming the signing of this historic document, the United Nations is prepared to work closely with the Eritrean and Ethiopian authorities, the Organization of African Unity and all other parties concerned, to ensure the early implementation of the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities of 18 June 2000 and the Agreement of 12 December 2000. I trust that Member States will also be prepared to provide the two parties and the United Nations with all necessary assistance to this effect.

(*Signed*) Kofi A. **Annan**